



# Arizona Department of Agriculture

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## ***MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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### **Native American Tribe Joins Mediterranean Fruit Fly Combative Efforts – September 28, 2004**

(Phoenix) -- The Cocopah nation, along the western Yuma county border, has agreed to allow the Arizona Department of Agriculture to supply Mediterranean fruit fly traps and assist Cocopah inspectors initially to establish the traps in that region in an proactive effort to monitor the situation involving the Mediterranean fruit fly. Then, inspectors with the Cocopah will inspect and service the traps every week. This process will begin tomorrow.

The latest numbers in the case of one of the world's most devastating pests currently stand at 49 adults and 394 larvae in Mexico. This pest has the ability to attack numerous crops, and if it is found in a specific region, producers would be turned away from foreign and domestic markets.

Twenty traps serviced in the San Luis area on Monday showed no signs of the Medfly. This is the beginning of the service cycle for all new traps. As of Monday, the Arizona Department of Agriculture has placed an additional 414 traps throughout Yuma county. The total number of Medfly traps in the area is 596 and will increase throughout this week as more traps are placed.

If the Mediterranean fruit fly were to become established, consumer prices would go up and produce would become less available. In addition, backyard gardens, as well as commercial production areas, would

require increased use of pesticides on a routine basis. In the United States, the Medfly could attack peaches, pears, plums, apples, apricots, avocados, citrus, cherries, figs, grapes, guavas, kumquats, loquats, nectarines, peppers, persimmons, tomatoes, and several nuts.

For more information on the Mediterranean fruit fly, see

[www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet\\_faq\\_notice/fs\\_phmedfly.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_phmedfly.html).

**To Date:**

- The first servicing and inspection of traps in San Luis and along the border will begin the middle of this week and then we will know what the current situation is on this side of the border. This is much like a poll: Each trap is a snapshot in time. However, we trust we will not find any Medflies in our traps.
- More traps are being set in the Yuma metro region throughout this week to allow a closer monitoring of the situation in a county that produces \$1.5 billion in produce each year. Also, traps already in place in San Luis will be serviced twice a week, instead of once.
- Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano has declared the agricultural counties of Yuma, Santa Cruz, Pima and La Paz in a state of emergency. An additional 800 acres of date palms in Yuma County will house 10 traps per square mile, which will be inspected and serviced weekly, as the date palms are a magnet for the Mediterranean fruit fly. Trapping is also being increased to 10 traps per square mile at Yuma County cooling facilities. These traps will also be inspected and serviced weekly. Crews have already begun both these processes. Additional personnel will enable the department to continue with the level of intensity of inspections and trapping and increase those efforts as the situation mandates. In addition, the \$200,000 given in the Governor's proclamation will provide the department with the leverage needed to ask the United States Department of Agriculture for funds to support the State's activities.

- Growers and packers in Yuma county have been encouraged to inform their workers from Mexico to NOT bring high-risk commodities across the border in their lunch sacks. One infested fruit in a lunch could have exponential effects on this side of the border.
- All of the Arizona Department of Agriculture's exotic fruit fly traps in Yuma will have been serviced and refreshed to make sure they are effective at detecting the pest.
- In addition, California is releasing 100,000 sterile fruit flies per square mile. The area covered will be a 250 square mile region encompassing San Diego and the border. The purpose of these releases is to dilute the mating population of the Medfly and create a buffer between Mexico's fruit flies and California and Arizona's crops. The Arizona Department of Agriculture anticipates that it will see these sterile flies in its traps to show proactive efforts are working.
- The United States Department of Agriculture has placed restrictions on all commercial trucks carrying high-risk commodities trying to enter the United States through an international port between San Diego and El Paso. The aforementioned restrictions mean that any of the high-risk commodities must not have been packed, repacked or shipped through the metropolitan Tijuana area for entry into the United States. For a truck to enter the U.S. it must have a phytosanitary certificate stating the produce in question has not originated from, been trans-shipped through or been packed or repacked in Tijuana, Mexico.
- In addition, the Arizona Department of Agriculture is inspecting street vendors from Yuma to San Luis, as a proactive measure.

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